



Mental Health and Disability Services

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Purpose

The goal is to implement a coordinated service system for Iowans with mental illness, mental retardation, other developmental disabilities, or brain injury, in which individuals receive quality services that emphasize dignity and choice of service, including the ability for people with disabilities to live in communities of their choosing. Regional disparities in delivery of services must be eliminated.

Who

The public system of mental health and disabilities care in Iowa provides a safety net for the uninsured or those who do not have commercial health insurance benefits coverage to meet their needs. Each year about 70,000 adults with disabilities, mental illness, mental retardation, and other developmental disabilities are served.

What

- Service is provided by a wide range of local service agencies, including community mental health centers, plus state facilities such as mental health institutes and resource centers for people with mental retardation.
- Counties individually establish eligibility criteria for service and counties pay for about 20 percent of the disability delivery system. About 42 percent is federally funded through Iowa Medicaid via a contract with Magellan Behavioral Health. The state pays about 38 percent.

How are We Doing?

- In the wake of storms and disastrous flooding in 2008, the Mental Health and Disabilities Service division of the DHS created and serviced Project Recovery Iowa in which crisis mental health services were offered for thousands of disaster survivors. The program was supported by federal grants and delivered by regional mental health service providers selected by the DHS. Assistance for people experiencing delayed stress symptoms will be offered well into calendar 2009.
- The MHDS launched a mental health first aid program in 2008, training instructors in how to recognize mental illnesses and what to do if someone needs immediate help. People are familiar with first aid for physical injuries, but Iowa is one of the first states to begin training for first aid for mental illness crises.
- The Iowa Legislature approved one of the top DHS priorities in the spring of 2008—creation of a network of emergency mental health crisis centers across the state. Community mental health centers will join to offer regional crisis mental health counseling. The first systems are expected to begin operation in early 2009.
- In 2007, the MHDS division established an Anti-Stigma public awareness campaign using materials from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).